(ii) The State Government of Sikkim has constituted a State Level Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary to regularly monitor the progress of implementation of scheme in State.

Contract farming

†1381. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of contract farming in the country;

(b) whether the States are being forced to implement this; and

(c) whether opportunity is also being given to foreign companies for such farming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTIAL BHURIA): (a) Contract farming is practiced in various parts of the country for crops like sugarcane, cotton, tea, coffee, etc. The main feature of contract farming is that farmers grow selected crops under a buy-back agreement with an agency engaged in trading or processing. By now, in 17 States/Union Territories, relevant provisions have been made in the concerned Agricultural Produce Marketing Regulation Acts for providing a legal framework to contract farming and in seven States/Union Territories there are no regulatory laws preventing such buy-back arrangements. However, in other States also various forms of contract farming do exist in practice. The exact extent of land covered under contract farming in the country is not known. The contract farming is reportedly beneficial to the farmers as it takes care of price risk and also helps in mitigating production risk.

(b) No, Sir. In order to make contract farming arrangements beneficial for the farmers, as well as, the sponsoring companies under a legal framework, suitable provisions were included in the Model Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act formulated by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2003 and circulated to State Governments for considering suitable amendments in their concerned Act by adopting those provisions. The Model Act circulated by the Ministry is suggestive in nature, and, since Agriculture is a State subject, it is for the State Governments to decide on the implementation of the contract farming arrangements in their State.

(c) At present foreign companies are not reported to be undertaking contract farming in India.

Ensuring minimum income to farmers

†1382. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to constitute a commission to ensure minimum income to the farmers in order to check increasing trend amongst farmers of committing suicides;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.